

RULE 7.4  
COMMUNICATION OF FIELDS OF PRACTICE AND SPECIALIZATION

(a) A lawyer may communicate the fact that the lawyer does or does not practice in particular fields of law.

(b) A lawyer admitted to engage in patent practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office may use the designation "Patent Attorney" or a substantially similar designation.

(c) A lawyer engaged in Admiralty practice may use the designation "Admiralty," "Proctor in Admiralty" or substantially similar designation.

(d) A lawyer shall not state or imply that a lawyer is a specialist in a particular field of law, except upon issuance of an identifying certificate, award, or recognition by a group, organization, or association, a lawyer may use the terms "certified", "specialist", "expert", or any other similar term to describe his or her qualifications as a lawyer or his or her qualifications in any subspecialty of the law. If the terms are used to identify any certificate, award, or recognition by any group, organization, or association, the reference must:

(1) be truthful and verifiable and otherwise comply with Rule 7.1;

(2) identify the certifying group, organization, or association; and

(3) state that the Supreme Court of Washington does not recognize certification of specialties in the practice of law and that the certificate, award, or recognition is not a requirement to practice law in the state of Washington.

Comment

[1] [Washington revision] Paragraph (a) of this Rule permits a lawyer to indicate areas of practice in communications about the lawyer's services. If a lawyer practices only in certain fields, or will not accept matters except in a specified field or fields, the lawyer is permitted to so indicate.

[2] Paragraph (b) recognizes the long-established policy of the Patent and Trademark Office for the designation of lawyers practicing before the Office. Paragraph (c) recognizes that designation of Admiralty practice has a long historical tradition associated with maritime commerce and the federal courts.

[3] [Reserved.]

Additional Washington Comment (4)

[4] Statements indicating that the lawyer is a "specialist," practices a "specialty," "specializes in" particular fields, and the like, are subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph (d). The provisions of paragraph (d) were taken from former Washington RPC 7.4(b).

[Amended effective September 1, 2006.]

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